LAW OFFICE OF
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FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76112
[redacted]

April 24, 2013

Dear Fellow Trustees:

It is with a heavy heart that I write to you to share my disappointment with the outcome of our most recent Board meeting.

As a Howard Alumnae and a member of this Board for the past 14 years, I have served as Vice Chair since 2005. I have donated over $350,000 to the University and personally raised another $500,000 and I believe my contributions, love and devotion to our University are beyond reproach.

I can no longer sit quietly, notwithstanding my personal preference to avoid confrontation, and therefore, I am compelled to step forward to announce that our beloved University is in genuine trouble and "time is of the essence".

Howard will not be here in three years if we don't make some crucial decisions now.

- The combination of fewer students who can arrange financial aid, coupled with high school counselors who are steering students to less expensive state and junior colleges, has resulted in lower enrollment and this trend is expected to continue.
- Howard's Federal appropriation is expected to be decreased because of sequestration and the rationale for the University's existence is expected to be challenged since African American students can attend any college or university today.
- The Hospital has become a serious drain on the budget of the University and we need to either sell it or get the D.C. government to properly reimburse us for the care provided to its citizens.
- We lack an infrastructure for fundraising to replace decreasing tuition revenue and shrinking Federal dollars, and we lack access to the larger philanthropic community.
- We have too many employees on our payroll (approximately 5,000 employees to serve less than 10,000 students) and we cannot afford this!

We have ignored one impropriety after another beginning with the personal relationship between the President and the Chairman. After five years, we know their partnership has not served us well. In addition, the President's lackluster job performance has resulted in many poor decisions in finance, staffing, operations, and internal and external communications and that poor performance has drained the University of its funds, students, faculty and alumni support, and it has damaged our University's brand.

What occurred at the last Board meeting was only a symptom of the larger problems we must finally confront. Notwithstanding our ongoing conversations and concern about the direction and leadership of our beloved Alma Mater, our Board has not taken any action to improve its leadership or to address our concerns. Instead, we voted to marginalize the position of Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees and me. I was never consulted or advised of the bifurcation of my position as Vice Chair until one minute before I walked into the boardroom on Saturday. I was shocked, truly offended, and extremely disappointed with this under-handed tactic, which is inconsistent with the manner in which we do business as a Board.

This significant change in our governance structure altered a position- that of Vice Chair- that has been in place for the past 30+ years and the fact that this change was accomplished without any discussion with me or the Executive Committee, and without any vote of the full Board, suggests that this Chairman believes he can operate as though this University is his own personal corporation. We, as the Board, must insist that democratic processes are at the foundation of our governance.

We need to convene an emergency meeting to discuss the dysfunctional environment that is so pervasive throughout the University and the prevalent improprieties that plague its administration, and to begin a process of formulating a plan to address the very serious problems that exist today.

I suggest we immediately convene a confidential meeting during which we can discuss the detailed specifics of what has occurred on our watch, and determine how we will meet our fiduciary duty to the Howard community going forward. Therefore, I am hereby calling for an immediate and emergency meeting of the Board of Trustees to consider a vote of no confidence in both the Chairman of the Board and the President, and I insist that this meeting occur before any new members are added to our Board. This is not something they should have to confront upon their arrival to serve the University.

The future of this University is at stake and there comes a time when each of us will have to stand for what is right and just. I hope you will stand with me now.

Sincerely,

Renee Higginbotham-Brooks